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## THE ESSENES AND THE APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE \*

BY K. KOHLER, Hebrew Union College.

AMONG the treasures of Jewish Literature the Apocalyptic writings are least known to the average Jewish scholar, and their value is scarcely appreciated. The reason is that, while the Church has in some hidden corner of the world, where heretic sects continued to exist, preserved the one or the other, so as to enable learned travellers in recent times to bring them to light, the Jewish world let them fall out of sight together with the Apocryphal books, ever since the beginning of the Talmudic period. Accordingly Dr. Schechter in his *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 5, dismisses both of them with the following remark: 'Whilst these writings left a lasting impress on Christianity, they contributed, with the exception perhaps of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, little or nothing toward the formation of Rabbinic thought. The Rabbis were either wholly ignorant of their very existence, or stigmatized them as fabulous or external (a milder

\* 1. R. H. Charles, *A critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity, or Hebrew, Jewish and Christian Eschatology from Preprophetic times till the close of the New Testament Canon*, 2nd ed., A. and Ch. Black, 1913.

2. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, with an Introductory by W. O. S. Oesterley, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1917.

3. F. Crawford Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, The Schweich Lectures, 1913, London, 1914.

expression in some cases for heretical),<sup>1</sup> and thus allowed them to exert no permanent influence upon Judaism.' Obviously the eminent master of Rabbinic lore failed to take due cognizance of the extensive eschatological and cosmological passages, of the angelology and demonology, not to speak of the thaumaturgical matter which occupy so large a place in the Talmud and Midrash, and have exerted a decisive influence upon the views and doctrines of the Rabbis throughout all the centuries. All these show a striking family resemblance to the contents of the Apocalyptic literature and point to a common source of tradition, with the only difference that the latter presents the whole material in a coherent and systematized form, whereas the former has it all given sporadically in the form of tradition without order or system and without claiming any higher authority. Nor should the fact be ignored that some of the apocalyptic books appear in fragmentary form under other names in the Gaonic period, as was especially pointed out by Jellinek in his instructive introduction to his *Beth ha-Midrash* volumes. On closer investigation we cannot

<sup>1</sup> Schechter refers to the term ספרים החיצונים (Sanh. X, 1) in R. Akiba's dictum: 'He also (has no share in the world to come) who reads (in public) from the "extraneous" books.' But as is evidenced by דרך החיצונים (Meg. IV, 8; comp. Hag. 15 a זומא מבחוץ 'Ben Zoma is still outside the pale of doctrinal Judaism'), the term denotes heretics, aa Babl. Sanh. 100 b correctly explains it: ספרי המינים. Thus Alfasi still reads, while the Christian censor had it changed into הצדוקים. The text in Jer. Sanh. 28 a is corrupt, as was shown by Joël, *Blicke in d. Religionsgesch.*, I, 70-76, and should read ספרי הרמים כגון ספרי החיצונים כגון ספרי הרמים ( = the Hermes books, not המירוס) ספר בן סירא וכל הספרים שנכתבו מכאן ואילך הקורא בהן כקורא באגרת. A later deprecation of Ben Sira (Sanh. 100 b, previously quoted as one of the Kethubim (see Schechter, *JQR.*, III, 682) seems to have caused the corrupt reading in the Talmud Jer. as well as in Koheleth r. to XII, 12.

escape the conclusion that for this class of Haggadic material there existed among the apocalyptists of the Rabbinic schools a chain of tradition in the form of מסר and קבל similar to that which existed for the Halakic, as I have shown in the introductory article 'Cabala' in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* with especial reference to the Book of Jubilees. Of course, the Halakic tradition, being concerned with the practice of the law, bore an altogether democratic character in accord with the Pharisaic spirit and was traced back, as the first Mishnah of Aboth has it, to the last prophets and from there to Moses on Sinai. The apocalyptic lore, on the other hand, was originally esoteric in character and was believed to have come down as secret lore from the progenitors of the human race, from Enoch, Noah, or Adam and Shem (= Malkizedek), the Patriarchs, and also Job. This cosmopolitan view was given up by the Rabbis after the destruction of the first Temple, and the popular heroes of the Babylonian captivity such as Baruch and Ezra took the place of the men of hoary antiquity; and after the destruction of the second Temple and State the great martyrs of the Barkokba war became the bearers of the heavenly mysteries. At all events the belief in secret lore entrusted only to the few initiated was persistently maintained throughout centuries, as is shown by a comparison of Dan. 8. 26; 12. 4, 9; Enoch 82. 1; 43. 10; 104. 12 f., and 4 Ezra 14. 2 b; 47 with Hagigah 2. 1; Meg. 3 a, with reference to the Targum of Jonathan b. Uziel; or with Cant. R. 1. 29, 'the secret chamber of Behemoth and Leviathan called also the chambers of Paradise (*Agaddath Shir ha-Shirim*, ed. Schechter, 13, 99), 'the secrets of the Merkabah and of the Messianic end' (Pes. 56 a; Keth. 111 a; Sanh. 97 b).

Almost all Jewish authors agree that this entire secret lore known as *מעשה מרכבה* and *מעשה בראשית* (Hag. 2. 1), the theophany and the cosmogony as well as eschatology, formed the monopoly of the Essenes and their select successors (see Frankel, *Zeitschr.*, 1846, p. 457; *Monatsschr.*, 1853, p. 72; Graetz, *G. J.*, III, 494 f.; Jost, *G. d. Judenth.*, I, 212; Herzfeld, *G. V. Is.*, II, 408; Leopold Loew, *Mafteah*, 67). Ben Sira, III, 20-23, quoted in Hagigah 2. 1, obviously refers to this secret lore. That there exists a close relationship between Essenism and the Apocalyptic books has been especially shown by Jellinek in the introductory notes to his *Beth ha-Midrash*, see II: XIII f., XVIII; III: XX, XXXII, and elsewhere.

Of Christian writers it was Hilgenfeld who in his work *Die jüdische Apokalyptik*, 1857, pp. 243-86, endeavoured to prove the close relations of the Essenes to the Apocalyptic literature, and if he had recognized the real meaning of the name *Essaei* or *Essenes* (the one corresponding to the Hebrew *חשאים* 'the men of silence', the other to *ענינים* 'the discreet ones'), he would have more strongly adhered to this view later on, when he was misled by his critics to the assumption of foreign elements in Essenism on account of Josephus's sensational suggestions. Lucius partly endorsed Hilgenfeld's view in his work *Der Essenismus*, 1881, p. 109 f., and the theory was further elaborated with especial reference to the beginnings of Christianity by an English scholar John E. M. Thomson in an interesting, yet rather antiquated work entitled *Books which influenced our Lord and His Apostles*, Edinburgh, 1891, pp. 12, 110, and elsewhere. That the apocalyptic lore formed the essential elements of nascent Christianity, and especially of the Messianic conception of Jesus, is to-day generally admitted, owing chiefly

to Baldensperger's book, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, which has gone through several editions since 1888. All the more strenuously is the connexion of Essenism with the apocalyptic literature denied by many Christian writers of to-day, as is specifically done by Baldensperger. It is quite characteristic, then, that Charles in his work on Hebrew, Jewish, and Christian Eschatology ostensibly avoids the very name of the Essenes, and, instead, speaks of the 'Chasids' of the Maccabean period, 'the forerunners of the Pharisees', as 'the authors of these prophetic or rather deutero-prophetic works', 'the champions of the higher theology in Israel'. In describing their character he uses the following glowing terms (pp. 171-3 of the second edition): 'Though first appearing as the champions of the Law against Hellenizing Sadducees, they were still more the representatives of advanced forms of doctrine on the Messianic Kingdom and the resurrection. To this comparatively small body of men was entrusted for some decades the defence, confirmation, and development of the *religious truths that were to save the world* (the Italics are mine). How nobly and with what prodigal self-sacrifice they proved themselves worthy guardians of this sacred trust is told for all time in the Enoch and Maccabean literature. Through their agency the spiritual aspirations of the Old Testament few became in the course of a century the unshakeable conviction of Palestinian Judaism.' And here the author has in the second edition of the work—which is on the whole a reprint of the first—an entirely new chapter on Prophecy and Apocalyptic (173-206), which is of special interest to the Jewish reader. Here the claim is set forth that the apocalyptic lore 'while built upon the ancient prophecy, was the result of the same psychical experience and

concerned with the same object, the future of life, but it had a larger scope than the latter, it being universal and unlimited as to time, having an infinitely wider view.' 'It sketched in outline the history of the world and of mankind, the origin of evil, its course and inevitable overthrow, the ultimate triumph of righteousness and the final consummation of all things. It was in short a Semitic philosophy of religion, and as such it was ever asking: Whence? Wherefore? Whither? and it put these questions in connexion with the world, the Gentiles, Israel, and the individual. Apocalyptic, and not prophecy, was the first to grasp the great idea that all history alike, human, cosmological, and spiritual, is a unity—a unity following naturally as a corollary of the unity of God, preached by the prophets.' 'Only by reason of the completion of the Biblical Canon, which implied the cessation of prophecy, pseudonymity was resorted to by the writers, which condition,' says our author, 'changed with the rise of Christianity.' Thus in emphatic contradiction to the view of Jewish scholars who 'have denied to apocalyptic its place in the faith of pre-Christian orthodox Judaism'—a view which he declares to be 'absurd' and a 'blunder'—our author claims 'the existence of *two* forms of Pharisaism in pre-Christian Judaism, i.e. the apocalyptic and the legalistic'. The former, he says, 'has given birth to, and shaped the higher theology of Judaism and became, historically speaking, the parent of Christianity'; the latter 'drove the apocalyptic from its position of secondary authority and either banished it absolutely, or relegated it wholly into the background, and so arose Talmudic Judaism'.

Obviously Dr. Charles wanted to offer in this additional

portion of the second edition of his work the keynote and central idea of his whole book, which was to present an exhaustive exposition of the entire development of Jewish eschatology as emanating from the prophetic concept of 'the day of Jahweh' with the view of having it culminate in the appearance of Jesus the Christ as the fulfilment of the prophetic hopes 'made world-wide by the apocalyptic writers'. Now, while there are here and there valuable observations presented in the book, the author makes himself rather guilty of an egregious 'blunder' when he ascribes to 'the older Pharisees', 'the Chasids', 'the spiritual children of the Scribes', the belief in their own power of prophecy, after these very Scribes, or Soferim, had declared (see Psalm 74. 9 and Tos. Sota XIII, 2) that with the death of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the power of prophecy, or the holy spirit, ceased. As a matter of fact, only the Essenes still believed in the continuous working of the spirit of prophecy, as is learned from Josephus (*B. J.*, II, 8, 12; I, 3, 5; III, 8, 3. *Comp. B. Wisdom VI, 25*). Moreover, if anything may be termed 'absurd', it is to assume that the later Pharisees should have forgotten the very existence of the books rated so highly by the former, particularly when we consider that these apocalyptic writings appeared at the time when the schools of Hillel and Shammai 'the fathers' of Talmudic lore, the contemporaries of King Herod, and that of Johanan ben Zakkai at the close of the Temple period flourished. Surely the most superficial glance at the history of Jewish literature of the time would have convinced our author of his erroneous construction of Judaism, and shown him that what he calls legalistic Judaism, that is, the Halakah, had its counterpart in the Haggadah which contains the free and popular discussion of the same



human, cosmological, and eschatological problems that form the substance of the apocalyptic literature, and offer the same wide outlook upon the world. Indeed, we find here occasionally—compare, for instance, Hagigah 14 b, Suk. 28 a—the same psychical experiences, ecstatic visions and auditions of Pharisean leaders as the apocalyptists had. Only authoritative power was denied in the schools to such mystic forces (see *B. M.*, 59 b. : No regard is to be given to the heavenly voice, for it is said : ‘It is not in heaven’, Deut. 30. 12). As a matter of fact, Pharisaic or Soferic Judaism in placing the book of Daniel among the Hagio-grapha, denied from the very start its prophetic character, and consequently could not ascribe to the books of Enoch and similar writings based on the visions of Daniel any kind of prophetic or ‘deutero-prophetic’ character. Thus the whole theory of Dr. Charles falls to the ground.

F. Crawford Burkitt in his luminous lectures on Jewish and Christian apocalypses approaches the subject with more fairness. The following fine remarks, pp. 5–6, are worth quoting : ‘The wise men of Israel who came after Ezra had the Law already, but it was they who brought the prophets into the form in which we read them, and the Psalms, whatever ancient fragments they may probably contain, were in the main their work. To the prophets it had been given to make the Religion of Israel, but the Scribes made the Bible. It is difficult, when we think of the immense effect that the Old Testament has had, to find words high enough to describe the importance of the work of the Scribes for after generations. And yet it was secondary and derivative. The Scribes had not in themselves the direct and masterful authority that belonged to the Prophets who went before them. They were not commissioned

themselves to say: "Thus saith the Lord". And so, when the crisis came, we find a new phenomenon. The Jew who feels himself to have a new message for his brethren shelters himself under a pseudonym. The original literature of the two centuries and a half that preceded the capture of Jerusalem is either anonymous, or it professes to be the work of some "worthy of old time". It is difficult to know in particular cases how far the pseudonymity was an understood literary artifice and how far it was really deceptive. What I think is clear, is that both authors and readers believed that, if any Revelation from God was true, it could not be new. It must have been given to the great Saints of antiquity.' Especial stress is laid, p. 7, and rightly so, on the fact that 'in Daniel there is a philosophy of universal History'; 'there is something cosmopolitan about his outlook upon the world'. 'Judaism is to the author of Daniel a cosmic world-religion.' 'The Kingdom of God—that is the central idea.' But then, claiming that with Christianity the new age predicted by Daniel (and the other apocalyptists) had come, Dr. Burkitt discriminates in favour of the New Testament Apocalypse ascribed to John the Divine, the writer of the letter to the seven Churches of Asia, claiming that he comes with 'a new message given to the contemporary seer' and no longer pseudonymic. This is an uncritical attitude. The apocalyptic portion there as well as those in Matthew 24 to 25 were simply taken over from Jewish sources. Another erroneous statement is made by Burkitt when he differentiates between the time before and after the capture of Jerusalem, ascribing 'the renunciation of the apocalyptic idea' to Johanan ben Zakkai and his school (p. 12). 'He finds this in a very sagacious interpretation of the controversy between R. Akiba and Johanan ben

Zakkai in Gen. R. 44. 25,<sup>2</sup> where R. Akiba, in explaining the words **ביום ההוא** in Gen. 15. 18 after Isa. 25. 9, says, God revealed to Abraham both this world and the world to come, whereas R. Johanan ben Zakkai referring to Zech. 14. 9, says, only this world was revealed to Abraham. R. Akiba as the ardent adherent of Bar Kokba worked, he thinks, in the spirit of the Apocalyptists, for the immediate establishment of the Kingdom of God by the expected Messiah, while Johanan ben Zakkai was, 'when the destruction of Jerusalem was sealed, to guide Jewish thought and religion into new channels, and thus to create the reformed Judaism of Jamnia and Tiberias'. Dr. Burkitt certainly tries to be just in his estimate of Pharisaism when he says (p. 15): 'The work of Johanan ben Zakkai and his successors was quietly heroic, and they succeeded so well in their reorganization of Judaism that their work stands to this day. But . . . they were able to carry their work through, just because they had dropped the conviction that had produced the apocalypses. That is the reason why these documents, speaking generally, were preserved in Greek, and not in Hebrew; by Christians and not by Jews.' He forgets, however, that the Ezra and Baruch Apocalypses emanated, as has been shown by F. Rosenthal (*Vier apokalyptische Bücher aus der Zeit und Schule R. Akiba's*, 1885), from these very schools before the Hadrianic war. The concluding words of his first lecture are also dictated by a spirit of fairness when he says: 'The nation left two

<sup>2</sup> The passage reads: **ר' יודן: ריב"ז ור"ע חד אמר העה"ז גלה לו אבל** **הע"ה לא גלה לו, ואחרנא אמר אחד הע"ז והע"ה גלה לו**; comp. also Midrash Lekah Tob. Akiba's longing after the Messianic time finds its characteristic expression in his declaration of the Song of Songs as 'the most holy of all the Writings' (Yadayim, III, 5).

successors, the Christian Church and the Rabbinical Schools, each of which carried on some national aim. And of the two it was the Christian Church that was most faithful to the ideas enshrined in the Apocalypses, and it did consider itself, not without some reason, the fulfilment of those ideas. . . . The new age which they announce proved when it came to be different from what the Apocalypticists taught, not only of the great movement which they heralded, but also of the unconquerable hope in the future to which they testify.' On the whole Dr. Burkitt casts no more light upon the authorship and the sources of the Apocalyptic literature than does Dr. Charles.

Oesterly, in his *Introduction to the Book of Enoch*, pp. viii-xi, goes much deeper into the motive and inner working of the Apocalyptic writers, pointing chiefly to the supernatural which plays a great part in the whole literature which deals so much with other-worldly forces. He correctly describes them as world-fleeing visionaries 'who received their message in some fantastic guise', unlike the large class of Pharisees. Especially striking is the emphasis laid by him on their 'rigid predestinarianism'; their absolute conviction that the whole course of the world was predetermined by God Almighty before all time. 'This', he writes, 'was a fundamental postulate of the Apocalypticists who devoted much of their energy to calculations based upon the close study of prophecy as to the exact period when history should reach its consummation.' 'But all these things were divine secrets hidden from the beginning of the world, but revealed to God-fearing men to whom was accorded the faculty of peering at the hidden things of God; upon these men was laid the privilege and the duty of revealing the divine secrets of others, hence their name, revealers.'

But Oesterly fails to see that this is exactly what Josephus says of the Essenes (*Ant.*, XIII, 5, 9; comp. XVIII, 1, 3-5). While the Pharisees hold that certain things are predetermined by destiny and certain things by human power, the Essenes 'declare destiny to govern all things and that nothing happens but is so decreed (by divine Providence)'. This is not, as Bousset (*Relig. des Jud.*,<sup>2</sup> 533) says, a 'fatalistic view altogether foreign to the legalistic spirit of Judaism'. To a certain extent Pharisaism also voiced the doctrine of predestination in such sentences as 'No bird is caught in the snare without heaven's decree' (Gen. r. LXXIX, 6; comp. Matt. 10. 29), or 'No one bruises his finger here below, but it has been decreed in the world above' (Hul. 7 b). Only Pharisaism would not allow an interference with man's freedom, as stated by Akiba הכל צפוי והרשות נתונה (Aboth III, 19). It denied any one living after the three last prophets the power to foresee and foretell the future (Tos. Sota XIII, 2; Sota 48 b; Yoma 9 b), whereas the Essenes claimed to possess such power, 'being trained', as Josephus states (*B. J.*, II, 8, 12) 'to use holy books, different modes of sanctification and prophetic utterances (for this purpose), and it is but seldom that they miss in their predictions'. Instances of this are given by Josephus in the case of the Essene Judas under the reign of Aristobulus I, who had 'disciples instructed at the Temple in the art of prophesying' (*B. J.*, I, 3, 5; *Ant.*, XIII, 11, 2), or of Menahem the Essene, a contemporary of King Herod (*Ant.*, XV, 10, 5), the predecessor of Shammai as head of the school (Hagiga, II, 2; comp. Graetz, *G. J.*, III<sup>4</sup>, 213, and Geiger, *J. Z.*, VII, 17 b). The real character of such prophetic power is best illustrated by what the Haggadists tell of Adam as the

first man who emanated from the hands of the Creator: he read from God's book in which all things are written, all the events of the future (see Midrash Teh. to Ps. 139, 16; Ab. d. R. N. XXXI, Pesik. R. XXIII; Sanh. 38 b; Tanh., Beresch., ed. Buber, 29). There is also a significant remark in the Midrash (Gen. r. XLIX, 8): 'Before God revealed His counsel to the prophets' (Amos 3, 7), He revealed it to His worshippers of hoary antiquity (Ps. 25, 14), and afterwards to the patriarchs, the upright ones' (Prov. 3, 32). Exactly this is claimed in the Apocalyptic literature for Adam, Enoch, Noah, and again for the patriarchs and Moses down to Ezra. As Volz in his *Jüd. Eschatologie von Daniel bis Akiba*, 1903, p. 5, correctly says: 'Apocalyptic is secret lore ("Geheimwissenschaft") received from heaven and kept in books hidden by the wise' who keep the secrets (Dan. 12, 4, 9; 4 Ezra 12, 37 f.; 14, 6-7; 45-47; comp. Aeth. Enoch 109, 12-13; 17, 3; Slav. Enoch 24, 3; B. Jubilees, 7, 38; 12, 27; 45, 16, see Charles, who regards the book as an Esoteric Tradition (Introd. L; so is Assumptio Mosis named also Secreta Moysi, Charles, Introd. xlv). But so were the Essenes keepers of secret lore, a 'mysterienverein', as Bousset, *l. c.*, 532, calls them, pledged 'by a fearful oath' to guard the sacred books of the order and not divulge or alter their contents (Josephus, *B. I.* II, 8, 7). And the contents of these 'writings of the ancients' (τῶν παλαιῶν συντάγματα (II, 8, 6; comp. Philo using the same terms regarding the Therapeutae, II, 475), that is the books ascribed to the men of hoary antiquity, are by no means of merely a magical character, as Bousset, *l. c.*, thinks, but especially the cosmological or cosmogonic and the celestial mysteries known in Rabbinical literature as מעשה מרכבה ומעשה בראשית (Hagig. II, 1), and chiefly so the eschatological

secrets. According to later Rabbinical views, however, these were either withheld from every mortal (Shab. 138 b ; Pes. 56 a ; Mid. Lekah Tob. to Deut. 29. 28), or all these calculations concerning the 'end' were deprecated and declared to be deceptive (Sanh. 97 a, b, 99 a ; Meg. 12 a ; comp. Cant. r. 2. 18-19). Yet it is exactly upon such calculations from prophetic utterances (Dan. 9. 2) after certain world periods and jubilees that the apocalyptists based their predictions. Whether these world periods were taken over from Babylonia or from Persia, it was certainly only in these esoteric circles that calculations concerning 'the end' (Dan. 11. 31, 35 ; 12. 9, 13) were made.

But it is noteworthy that G. Behrmann in the Introduction to his very valuable Commentary to Daniel, 25-26, comes to the conclusion that the book was written *within* and *for* the esoteric circle of the Hasidim who were admonished to await patiently the divine help without any human interference (Dan. 8. 25 ; comp. 2. 34). This is exactly what Josephus (*Ant.*, XVIII, 15) says of the Essenes, that 'their chief doctrine is that all things should be left to God'. These Asideans of the Maccabean books kept apart from the Pharisees, as Wellhausen, *Pharisäer u. Sadducäer*, p. 79 f., has shown. Yet these are the very ones from whom the Essenes emanated, and 'the whole literature of the Essene order' to which Josephus refers is none other than the Apocalyptic literature.

In order that the holy spirit of wisdom should come over them and prepare them for divine revelations or visions, Daniel (9. 3 f. ; 10. 12) and Ezra (4 Ezra 5. 13 ff. ; 9. 23 f.) spend days in fasting and prayer, and for the same purpose the Essenes abstained from all sexual intercourse (Josephus, *B. I.* II, 8, 2), exactly as the people of Israel in

preparation for the Sinai revelation were told 'not to come near a woman' (Exod. 19. 15), and when afterwards they were told 'to return to their tents', Moses was to remain with God 'to receive the Law' (Deut. 5. 27-28), this being understood to refer to abstinence from conjugal life enjoined upon Moses (see Targ. Jer. to the passage; Ab. d. R. Nathan II; Shab. 87 a; Philo, *Vita Mosi*, III, 2). Accordingly the Midrash (Sifre Num. 99) tells that, when Eldad and Medad had become prophets, Zipporah, the wife of Moses, exclaimed: 'Woe to the wives of these men!' inasmuch as they were no longer to have intercourse with their husbands (comp. Enoch's state of virginity when having his visions (Enoch 83. 2; 85. 3; and Apoc. of John 14. 4). Such a state of sanctification was deemed necessary by the Essenes for the receiving of the spirit of prophecy and the invocation of the Name of God for the performance of their miraculous cures, but must not be taken as the acceptance of the monastic principle of celibacy, or as mere misogyny, as Philo II, 638 and Josephus, *l. c.*, want to make the reader believe. In fact, Philo expressly tells us (II, 632) that the members of the order were 'all full grown men and already verging upon old age, such as are no longer carried away by the vehemence of the flesh nor under the influence of their passions, but in the enjoyment of genuine and true liberty'. Also later on, when speaking of those who have reached a feeble old age, he uses the significant words: 'they spend their life in happiness, even if they happen to be childless.' More explicitly he says of the Therapeutae, the Egyptian branch of the Essenes (II, 474), 'Abandoning their property . . . they flee, without turning back, leaving their brethren, their children, their wives, their parents, their numerous families, their affectionate friends, their



native lands in which they have been born and brought up.' And this world-flight he frequently extols as the means of obtaining a holier state of the soul when referring to Enoch (II, 410), to the Levites (I, 238, 559), or to himself (I, 81), and those who are to receive the mysteries of Moses and of Jeremiah, 'the prophet and hierophant' (II, 147-8).

This strange world-flight of the Essenes who had settled apart from all Palestinian civilization in the fertile palm region of En Gedi near the Dead Sea, became a particular object of wonder to the non-Jewish world which was especially interested in the asphaltum and the apobalsamum derived from the neighbourhood. Hence spread such fantastic descriptions as are given by Pliny (*N. H.* V, 15), Dio Chrysostomus (Synesias Dio Chr. IV-V), and others after an older common non-Jewish source (see Lucius, *Der Essenismus*, 32), according to which this Essene colony, isolated from the rest of the Jews and recruited ever anew by newcomers eager to live like them in a state of celibacy, remote from the world, had its existence there from a remote antiquity 'since thousands of centuries', 'a perennial nation' as Pliny says, or 'a blissfull commonwealth', as Dio Chrysostomus puts it. Puzzling as is the fact that no reminiscence of this undoubtedly ancient colony of Essenes at En Gedi is found in Talmudic literature, while the locality famous for its costly apobalsamum (Shab. 28 a) was well known to the rabbis, we must take notice of a remarkable Jewish tradition clustering around 'the fertile land of Jericho' which seems to cast some light upon the record in Pliny. It is the oft-repeated Midrashic story concerning the sons of Jonadab, the Rechabites of the Kenite tribe, kinsmen of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses (Mek. Yithro 2, p. 62; Sifre Num. 78. 81 and Deut. 352;

Ab. d. R. N., XXXV, ed. Schechter, 105; Yalk. Judges 1. 16; Sota 11a; Tem. 16a), according to which Joshua at the division of the Holy Land assigned the fertile portion of Jericho 'the city of the palms' to the sons of Jonadab the Rechabite, who occupied it until the Temple of Solomon was built in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. Then they generously left it to the Benjamites and went to the plain of Arod in the South-land to become saintly devotees of the Law under the leadership of Jabez, the saintly one, who, according to the rabbis, was none else but the Judge Othniel the son of Kenaz. Of course, this haggadic legend, based upon the narratives in Judges 1. 16; 2 Kings 10. 15-23; Jer. 35. 2-19; 1 Chron. 2. 55 and 4. 9-12 (where the LXX and Targ. preserved the original רבב for רבה), has no historical value in the form in which it is presented; nevertheless it rests upon certain facts which are merely antedated. Certain it is that the sons of Jonadab the Rechabite occupied a distinct place among the patrician families of Judea during the second Temple, where they had a special day appointed for the offering of kindling wood for the altar (Taan. 4. 5); they are identified with 'the families of scribes', the inhabitants of Jabez. In identifying the Essenes 'Jessaioi' with the sons of Jonadab the Rechabite, Nilus, the Mount Sinai monk of the fifth century, quoted by Hilgenfeld (*Ketzergesch.*, p. 138 f.) obviously followed Jewish traditions such as we find in Pesik. r. 31, where they are spoken of as living 'in the land of Sinim' (Isa. 49. 12) in the South, according to the Targum, to be brought back with the ten lost tribes and especially the sons of Moses (Num. 1. 16. 15; Yer. Sanh. 10. 29 c; Ber. 7 a; Targ. Y. to Exod. 34. 10). They are probably the Elders of the South, זקני הנוב, who are said

to have answered the ten questions propounded to them by Alexander the Great (Tamid 31 b-32 a, b); comp. Frankel, *Zeitschr.*, 1846, p. 400). One of these 'sons of the water drinker', בני שוחה מים, as they are called, is especially recorded (Mek., *l.c.*) as having offered a sacrifice at the temple to call forth a special 'voice of heaven' in their praise, since, living outside of the holy land, they would as a rule offer no sacrifices. Before they moved to the South, where they left traces partly legendary, partly historical, until modern times,<sup>3</sup> they seem to have merged with the

<sup>3</sup> While Hegesippus (Eusebius, *H. Ch.* II, 23, 17) tells of 'a Rechabite priest' to have championed the cause of James the Elder at his martyrdom, and Jose ben Halafta claims to have descended from Jonadab ben Rekhab (Yer. Taan. IV, 68 a), we find in Benjamin of Tudela's travels, p. 70, a description of the Bne Rekhab as a warlike tribe inhabiting the province of Thema in South Arabia, and bent in common with their Arabian neighbours on predatory expeditions, Abraham Yagel's *Yaar ha-Lebanon*, quoted by Neubauer, *JQR*, I, 411-13, refers to the Rechabites together with the Ten Tribes and the children of Moses, all living beyond the river Sambation; likewise Jacob Saphir in his *Eben Saphir*, I, 96, and Joseph Schwarz in his *Holy Land* (Germ. Transl., p. 107), who mention them by the name given them by the Arabs, of *Yehud Hebr*, that is descendants of Heber the Kenite (Judges 4. 11). So does a Jewish tribe found by the Missionary Wolf, quoted by Andree, *Zur Volkskunde der Juden*, p. 226 f., in the mountains near Hedjaz, observing the Mosaic law, claim to be descendants of Jethro (comp. Num. 10. 28; Judges 4. 11). Of especial significance is also the story of Zosimus, a Christian apocryphon of the fifth or sixth century (see James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, Cambridge, 1893, p. 94 f., 101-3), containing a description of the life of the sons of Jonadab the Rechabite which has a decided Essene character. 'They abstain from sexual intercourse after they have brought to life two children.'

The identification of Jabez with Othniel the son of Kenaz is found also in the patristic literature where Kenaz is said to have been 'a prophet who lived in the land of Saar (?) and was buried in the cave of the Kenazite who was a Judge in the days of Anarchy' (comp. Judges 21. 25). The prophecy of Kenaz has been the subject of an apocryphon regarded by James (*l.c.*, 476-79) as originally Jewish. Both Jonadab and Jabez are counted among the persons who, like Enoch and Elijah, entered Paradise

Essene colony at En Gedi, and given it a peculiar character. So they regarded, next to the name of God that of Moses the legislator as inviolably sacred (Josephus, *B. I.* II, 8, 9).<sup>4</sup> This Essene colony at En Gedi seems to have some historical connexion with the assembly of the Elders or the Wise Men near Beth Gedi in Jericho, who heard a heavenly voice (Bath Kol), declaring one in their midst to have been worthy of receiving the holy spirit—the person referred to being understood to have been Hillel (Tos. Sota XIII, 3; Yer. Sota IX, 24 b; Horayoth III, 48 c; Sanh. 11 a). Still it is rather difficult to make this more than merely conjectural, as the text varies in the various sources.

To come back to the main point, the whole complexion of the apocalyptic literature points to circles remote from

alive (Derek Erez Suta I. ed. Tawrogi, p. 8). Jabez as contemporary of Jeremiah is mentioned in Syr. Apoc. Baruch 5. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Schwarz (*l.c.*, 290-3), while finding Essene traditions preserved in the Zohar, calls attention to Zohar III, 83, where the highest attributes are assigned to Moses as King, the verse Deut. 33. 5 וַיִּהְיֶה בִישׁוּרוֹן מֶלֶךְ being, in connexion with the preceding verse, referred to Moses: 'And he (Moses) became king in Jeshurun'—an interpretation found also in the Targ. Y. and the Lekah Tob, but not accepted in Sifre or elsewhere. That the name of Moses was invoked in an oath in Palestine is shown by its frequent use by R. Haggai (Yer. Demay, IV, 26 a; Yoma, I, 38 c; Meg. I, 72 a; Taan. IV, 67 b; Nazir 54 a; Sanh. II, 19 d; Hor. III, 47 d), and the former Palestinian R. Safrā (Shab. 101 b; Beza, 38 b; Sak. 39 a; Hult, 93 a), and the custom was kept up in Yemen in Maimonides' time (Sefer Hamizwoth, I, 7). This may have led the Essenes, as far as they claimed special relationship to Moses either as Rechabites (Kenites) or as Sons of Moses, (which may have originally simply signified, 'disciples of Moses'), to punish any abuse of the name of Moses with death. Of this great veneration of Moses, which comes near an apotheosis, traces are found in the Assumptio Mosis which presents him as a Mediator prepared from the foundation of the world (comp. סְרַסְרָר in Pes. r. 6; Exod. r. 3. 6; 6. 3; Deut. r. III. 13; I, 14; III, 12; comp. 11 16).

the seat of Pharisaic or Soferic Judaism, to a class of men, who, living rather on the borderland of Judaea, were brought more in touch with popular traditions and foreign currents of thought, such as Babylonian and Persian systems offered, and were therefore induced to create altogether new systems of thought. Especially the books of Enoch, which were of determining influence upon the rest, betray a familiarity with the geographical conditions of the land around the Dead Sea and along the Jordan river, which indicates the dwelling-place of their authors to have been in that neighbourhood rather than in any of the cities of Judaea. Thus the hot springs of Calliorrhoe to the East of the Dead Sea to which King Herod resorted to for his cure (Josephus, *B. I.* I, 33, 5), or of Machaerus (*eodem*, VII, 6, 3) are spoken of as having been brought to that state by the subterranean fires of Gehenna (Enoch 67. 5-11)—a view re-echoed also in the Talmud (Shab. 39 a). Still more clearly does the story of the fallen angels, who had their meeting-place upon Mount Hermon and whom Enoch found weeping at Abel Maim near the waters of Dan (Enoch 13. 7-9; comp. 2 Chron. 16. 4; 2 Sam. 20. 14 f.) betray a familiarity with the ancient folklore clustering around the sources of the Jordan and scarcely to be found in the schools of the Scribes. As a matter of fact, the whole story of Enoch and the fallen angels appears to be a survival of ancient Semitic mythology of which the verses in Gen. 6. 1-4 form but a fragment. Especially Mount Hermon, the top of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains, seems to have been originally 'the sacred seat of the old pagan deities', as the term חרמון indicates, and later on turned into a sort of Semitic 'Blocksberg' (Sepp, *Jerusalem u. d. Heilige Land*, II, 324).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The story of the fallen angels, the נפילים (comp. Pirk. d. R. E. XXII,

What is true of the books of Enoch, is no less true of the Book of Jubilees, where the story of Enoch and the fallen angels is likewise related, though only briefly; and also of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs where the heavenly tablets of Enoch are constantly referred to as in the Book of Jubilees.

But there is another important point to be considered in connexion with the apocalyptic lore, and that is the strange solar system of a year of 364 days presented by the Ethiopic book of Enoch (chaps. 72-82), and in a more elaborate form in the Book of Jubilees (6. 28-38), which is in direct contradiction to Jewish tradition, which adhered to the lunar calendar of the Scripture.

As a matter of fact, this could only be offered by such as formed an opposition to the authority of the Scribes. As was suggested by Abraham Eppstein, quoted by Charles,

(שנפלו מן השמים) with their two rebel chiefs Azazel, עֶזָּאֵל (comp. Brandt, *D. Mand. Rel.* 198 and Norberg's *Onomasticon*) and Semiaza, שְׁמִיָּאָזָא (the full name שְׁמִיָּא אֲחֻזָּי 'the seizer or assailant of heaven' like Etanim or Titans); see Sayce, *Babylonian Literature*, p. 32, and comp. Angra Mainyu in Bundahish, III, 26, Stave, *Parsismus im Judenth.*, p. 176, note) is found also and with characteristic additions in Mid. Abkir, see Yalk. Bereshith, 44, Jellinek, *B. H.*, IV, 127f. There Shamahazai in punishment of his seduction of the daughters of men and his instruction of them in the magic use of the ineffable Name is cast down to be henceforth *suspended* between heaven and earth. Both the Biblical story of the sexual union of the sons of God and the daughters of men and of Enoch's supreme station among the angels, וַיְהִי לֵךְ חֲנוּךְ אֶת אֱלֹהִים, was given a different interpretation by the rabbis (Exod. r. 25. 1; comp. also Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 14 ff. and the Ethiopic *Book of Adam and Eve*, transl. by Malan, chaps. xxx. ff., p. 137 f.). Enoch was degraded in the estimate of the rabbis, and later on also of the Church fathers, whereas the mystics and Cabbalists retained the views of the apocalyptists and created the celestial figure Henoch-Metatron, that is the heavenly charioteer of the Merkabah such as Mithras in the Persian mythology was (see besides Kohut, *Angelolog.*, p. 36 f., and Aruk, Windischmann, *Zoroastr. Stud.*, 309 ff., and *J. E.*, VIII, 500, art. 'Merkabah').

*B. Jubilees*, p. 55, note, the underlying idea seems to have been to build up a chronology based on the heptade of months, years, and Jubilees. Yet this again points to the Persian idea of the seven millennia referred to also in other apocalyptic books such as the Slav. Enoch, 33. 1, the Book of Adam and Eve, p. 42, and the *Assumptio Mosis* X, 12 (where the text has been tampered with by Christian copyists), and echoed also in the Talmud (Sanh. 97 a; comp. Midr. Teh. Ps. 90. 17). Such calculations are alluded to also in Syr. Apoc. Baruch LVI, 2. This entire eschatological and cosmological system, with its angelology and demonology, is the product, not of the Scribes or of the Pharisaic schools, but of a special class of men who kept in touch with Persian and cognate lore and shaped an esoteric Jewish lore in adaptation of the views and methods prevalent in the same. Only in such secluded circles such as the Essenes were, not confined to the land of Judaea and rather eager to enlarge their theological system by borrowing from other religious doctrines and practices, or mysteries, could the apocalyptic lore with its hosts of angels and demons and its peculiar concepts of heaven and hell emanate, so as to remain more or less the monopoly of the few, also the mystics of the Talmudic and Gaonic period. The eschatological lore is characteristically called, 'the mysteries of God' which were not to be divulged (Tanḥ. Wayehi, 9 ed. Buber, comp. Midr. Teh. Ps. 119. 38). But especially instructive are the words in Midr. Tanḥ. Waera 4, which contains a reminiscence of these apocalyptic writers in the following words: 'The tribe of Levi was free for study (לְטַרְנִיָּה, the Greek *θεωρία* = 'contemplation'), and so Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron: "You only make the work hard to the men to which they should apply, instead of listening

to the vain words contained in the scrolls which are offered to them from Sabbath to Sabbath to comfort them by the message of the coming divine redemption''' (comp. Apoc. Baruch 86. 1 and 77. 12).

It is easy to see why these apocalyptic writings were rejected by the Pharisaic schools, while a large part of their contents was appropriated by them. Already Ben Sira III, 19-24 says that secret lore is only for the humble, but warns against intruding into the hidden things which are beyond men, as it leads them astray. So does the Mishnah Hag. II, 1 most emphatically deprecate such prying into what is above and beneath, or what was before and will be thereafter, and it directly forbids such teaching in public, that is to more than one or two worthy disciples, of the theophanic and cosmogonic lore; and the Amoraim (Babli Hag. 13 a; Yer. Hag. 77 c) refer directly to this passage in Ben Sira as the source. In regard to the eschatological mystery the Midr. (Tanḥ. Wayehi 9) refers to the verse in Proverbs 25. 2: 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing', to which also the Mishnah in Hagigah seems to allude.

Over against the whole attitude of the Essenes who believed in resorting to supernatural interference through miracles and invocations, the Pharisean leaders based themselves upon the Scriptural words: 'It is not in heaven' (Deut. 30. 12) (see B. M. 59 b), their purpose being to bring religion within the domain of human life. For the same reason they discouraged all apocalyptic predictions based upon the pre-deterministic view of the Essenes as hampering men's freedom of action and self-reliance. Moreover, while Essenism and the Apocalyptists were chiefly concerned with the Messianic Kingdom and the world to come, taking the pessimistic view such as is expressed in 4 Ezra 7. 3:



‘Many are created, but few are saved’—which has its parallel in the Testament of Abraham (11, and Matt. 22. 14), and also in the opinion voiced by the Shammites against the Hillelites: *טוב לאדם שלא נברא משנברא* ‘It were better for man had he not been created than to be created (Erubin 13 b)—the predominant view of the rabbis is optimistic. As it is expressed by Nahum of Gimzo, ‘All is for the best’, and likewise by Akiba (Taan. 21 a; Ber. 60 a; comp. R. Jacob in Aboth 4. 22). The whole point of view of the Essenes and the Apocalyptists is like that of the New Testament other-worldly, whereas that of the Pharisees was rather this-worldly, as may be learned from the saying of R. Meir ‘Even death is “Good” (Gen. r. 9. 5; comp. 18–13), and Hillel’s view (Lev. r. 34. 3) that the human body should be honoured as the dwelling-place of the Divine Spirit. Pharisaism aimed at making of the Law a religious democracy, following the maxim: ‘The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children’ (Deut. 29, 28). Essenism with its world-contempt and secret lore, as voiced in the Apocalyptic literature, could only appeal to the few. It was a preparation for the Kingdom of God; hence the Essene and the New Testament morals were ‘to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees’ (Matt. 5. 20) such as found expression in the latter part of Enoch (99 to 108), which is also the source of the Beatitudes and Woes of the New Testament (Matt. 5 and 23, and Luke 6).